JONATHAN HICKMAN • ESAD RIBIC • IVE SVORCINA

SECRET WARS

#9
OF 9

MARVEL

GRAW!

"I SEE NOW..."

GATHERED ARMIES SPRAWLING TO THE HORIZON...

...ALL THIS STRUCTURED CHAOS, IT *REEKS* OF MACHINATION, T'CHALLA.

YOU ORCHESTRATED THIS, DIDN'T YOU?

HE HAD SOME HELP.

IT'S OVER, VICTOR. THIS MADNESS HAS TO END.

COME NOW, NAMOR. THE TWO OF YOU KNOW THE EXPECTATIONS THAT COME WITH BEING A RULER OF MEN. I'M SURE THAT IF YOU TRY, YOU CAN IMAGINE THE ONES A *GOD* MUST BE BURDENED WITH.

AND THAT HAS VALUE. YOU COULD JOIN ME. I WOULD RAISE A NEW ATLANTIS. I WOULD REMAKE WAKANDA.

I CAN GIVE YOU BACK EVERYTHING YOU'VE LOST.

AND WHAT GOOD WOULD THAT BE? A FAKE KINGDOM, ON A MANUFACTURED WORLD, SUBJECTED TO THE WHIMS OF A VAIN FRAUD...

YOU MAY HAVE THE POWER, VICTOR, BUT RAISING UP A NEW WAKANDA WOULD REQUIRE A VISION YOU JUST DON'T POSSESS.

AND *YOU* DO? IS THAT YOUR PLAN? YOU HAVE AN INFINITY GAUNTLET, AND WITH IT YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO TAKE MY POWER FOR YOURSELF?

THE FALLEN KING OF WAKANDA...REBORN AS A MESSIAH?

ACTUALLY...

...I ALWAYS ASSUMED EVERYONE WOULD PREFER IT BE *ME* THIS TIME.

YOU THOUGHT WRONG.

GOODBYE, VICTOR.

NRRRRHHH...

KRSSSHH

IT CAN'T BE THAT EASY.

IT WON'T BE.

THAT.

HURT.

ARRRRGGGHH!

GOOD.

THEN LET'S GET STARTED.

BUT PAIN OFTEN BRINGS CLARITY, T'CHALLA.

I SEE YOU NOW.

YOU HAVE MY FULL ATTENTION.

NO. LET US *FINISH* THIS...

...AND DO SO AS *GODS*...

BOOM

"...ON THE EARTH.

"IN THE SKY.

"AND THE HEAVENS ABOVE."

SECRET WARS

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THE MULTIVERSE WAS DESTROYED.

•

TWO LIFE RAFTS ESCAPED THE FINAL COLLISION OF EARTH-616 AND EARTH-1610, CARRYING HEROES AND VILLAINS FROM BOTH REALITIES.

•

THE SURVIVORS AWAKENED ON BATTLEWORLD, A PLANET COMPOSED OF THE FRAGMENTS OF UNIVERSES THAT NO LONGER EXIST AND MAINTAINED BY THE IRON WILL OF ITS GOD AND MASTER, VICTOR VON DOOM–AND THE MOLECULE MAN, SECRETLY WIELDING THE STOLEN POWER OF THE BEYONDERS.

•

NOW, THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN DOOM AND THE RAFT SURVIVORS HAS BEGUN, AND ALL OF BATTLEWORLD HANGS IN THE BALANCE...

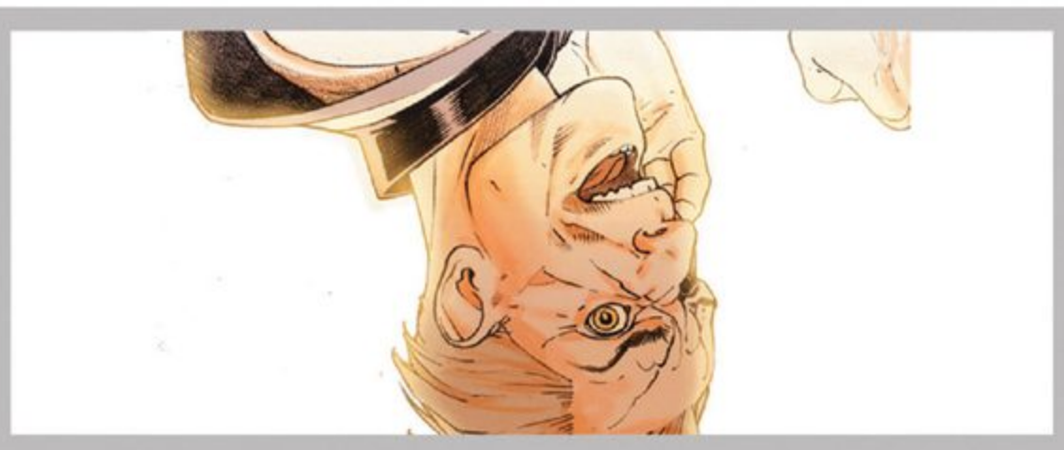
09

BEYOND

CAST

BATTLEWORLD

GOD EMPEROR DOOM, RULER OF BATTLEWORLD

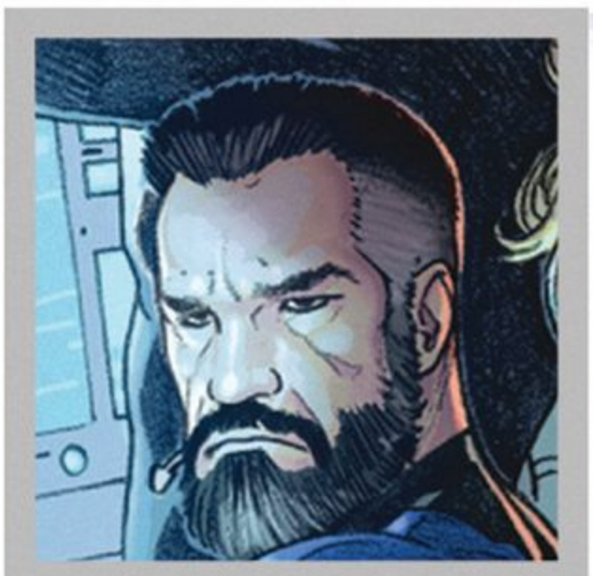


OWEN REECE, THE MOLECULE MAN

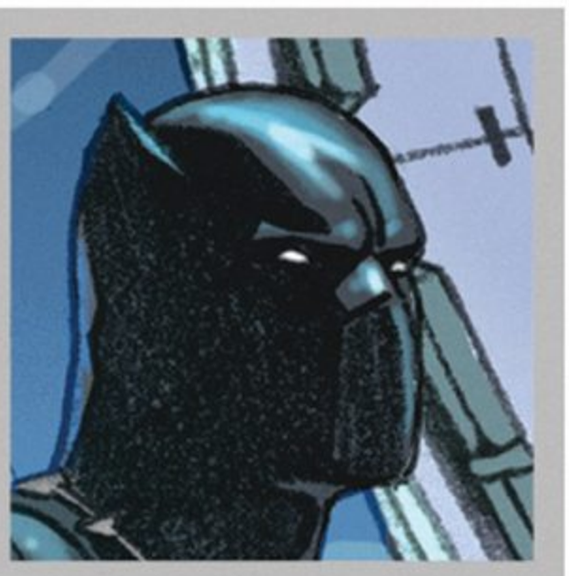
SUSAN STORM, ROYAL CONSORT

VALERIA, HEAD OF THE FOUNDATION

SURVIVORS OF THE FINAL INCURSION



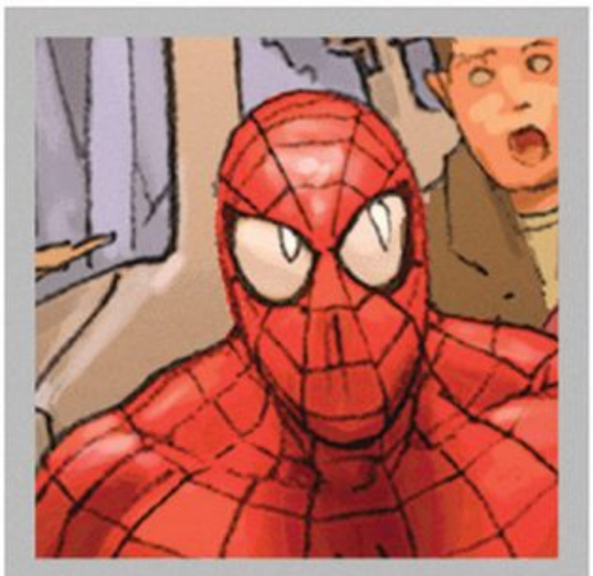
MR. FANTASTIC



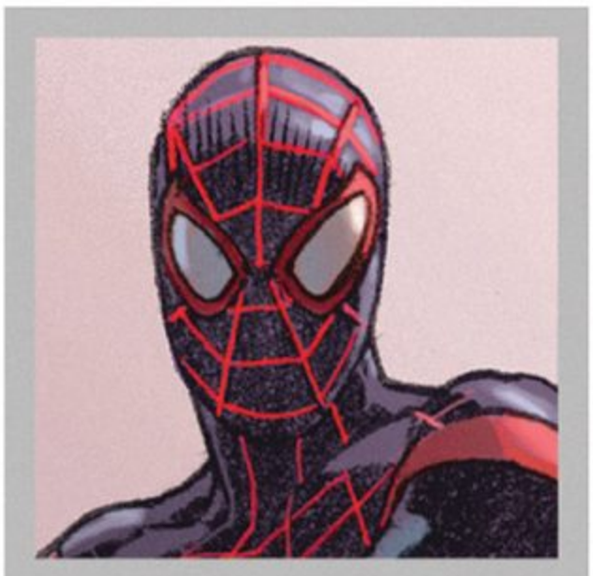
BLACK PANTHER

NAMOR

THE MAKER



SPIDER-MAN-616



SPIDER-MAN-1610

YOU!

I REMEMBER YOU.

THAT CAN'T BE...

FROM WHAT I UNDERSTOOD, YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS. WHAT I WAS.

DO YOU REALLY KNOW ME, SUSAN?

YES. I SAW YOUR FACE. THERE WAS A HOLOGRAM OF A BATTLE. YOU WERE FROM THAT SHIP, AND WERE FIGHTING THE THORS.

YOU PEOPLE ***MURDERED*** STEPHEN STRANGE.

ACTUALLY, MOM, I'M NOT SURE THAT'S WHAT--

OF COURSE. YOU KNOW ME FROM A PICTURE...

I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH STEPHEN'S DEATH.

IT WAS DOOM.

YOU MEAN ***GOD.***

I MEAN VICTOR.

"AND HOWEVER WELL-INTENTIONED THIS WORLD OF HIS IS, I MEAN TO PUT THINGS BACK THE WAY THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE.

"I MEAN TO END THIS CHARADE."

BECAUSE THIS IS NOT THE LIFE WE ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE. NOT VAL. NOT ME.

AND CERTAINLY NOT YOU, SUSAN.

WHO... ARE YOU? REALLY?

MY NAME IS REED RICHARDS...

...AND I'M THE ONE WHO FIXES THINGS.

"Well...that didn't seem to go as expected.

"You know, they say you should never lie to the ones you love.

"Which is why I never lie to myself..."

You might want to consider that, Reed.

BE QUIET, MAKER. LISTEN... DO YOU HEAR THAT?

FIND THE QUIETEST PLACE IN THE WORLD--CALL IT HERE, CALL IT NOW--AND IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES AND LISTEN, YOU CAN HEAR THE SCREAMING.

DID YOU BRING ME SOMETHING TO EAT, REEDS?

I KNEW IT--BUT I WASN'T REALLY PREPARED FOR IT...

I'M SORRY, OWEN. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING. HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

OH...I'M *STARVING.*

I'M SURE. AN INFINITE NUMBER OF MISSING MOUTHS NOT BEING FED WILL DO THAT. BUT I THINK WE CAN HELP.

So this is the battery?

The repository for all of Doom's power?

YES.

HELLO. HELLO. HELLO.

Hello, yourself.

And if you don't mind, please excuse us for a moment...

OKAY.

WHAT IS--?

...I need to show Reed something.

Oh, this is something I've been saving...

Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z

"You have no idea how hard it was to construct a device capable of creating a proper temporal bubble out of available materials on this retrograde world."

But I did it. I overcame, like we always do.

The interesting thing about all this is that it's not like conventional time travel.

It's not point-to-point, more like a closed temporal environment-- so theoretically, one should only be able to move forward in time. To evolve.

However, you and I know differently, don't we? One actually can holistically visit the past.

It's a place of regret, and, my goodness, does it hurt.

I suppose I could apologize for this betrayal. But I saw you almost start crying up there with that woman who isn't your wife, and I just couldn't tolerate that kind of weakness.

What's the endgame here? Nostalgia for something that was never yours anyway? Really, Reed...

...who's interested in a weepy god?

ME.

Hmmmm?

HURK!

DID YOU KNOW THAT ONE ***ACTUALLY CAN*** HOLISTICALLY ENJOY PIZZA?

AND IT COMES IN ***SLICES!***

REED.
REED.
REED.
YOU BETTER BUCK UP, COWBOY...
...HE'S GOING TO BE HERE SOON.
"AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO SEE WHAT'S WHAT."
AARGHHHH!
CRUNCH
AND NOW WE'RE DONE, T'CHALLA...AND WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED?
NOTHING.
SFF
CRACK
YES, YOU TESTED ME...
...REDUCED ME TO THIS--WANTON PHYSICAL VIOLENCE... BUT I REMAIN DOOM. AND YOU, SOMETHING BENEATH ME...

A LESSER. A FOOL WHO DOESN'T KNOW THAT HE'S BEATEN.

A SMILING FOOL WHO... WHO...

WAIT. WHY ARE YOU SMILING AT ME, T'CHALLA?

WHY ARE YOU--

B-BECAUSE WE WERE BIDING TIME...AND YOU'RE GOING TO...TO LOSE. ALL THIS...STRUCTURED CHAOS...

IT...IT...REEKS OF MACHINATION...

D-DOESN'T IT?

THIS IS ALL A DISTRACTION.

...

SUSAN. VALERIA...

WHAT ARE YOU--

IS IT TRUE, VICTOR?

IS ALL OF IT *TRUE?*

SUSAN, THERE ARE COMPLEXITIES BEYOND EVEN *MY* ABILITY TO EXPLAIN. IF YOU WILL JUST TRUST ME AS YOU ALWAYS HAVE--

LIKE STEPHEN TRUSTED YOU?

I'M SORRY, SUSAN. I TRIED.

RICHARDDSSS!

YOU HAD TO MEDDLE, DIDN'T YOU?

OF COURSE YOU DID. YOU'RE A *MEDDLER.*

YOU HAVE SOME *GREAT PLAN,* I EXPECT. WHAT IS IT THIS TIME, REED? A NEW IDEA? A FRESH TAKE ON THE VERY OLD PROBLEM OF YOU AND I? HAVE YOU BUILT ANOTHER GREAT MACHINE?

NO. NOTHING LIKE THAT.

I JUST CAME TO CONVINCE OWEN THAT, PERHAPS, THERE'S A BETTER SOLUTION TO ALL THIS THAN YOU.

A BETTER SOLUTION...

YOUR ENTIRE LIFE, YOU HAVE BEEN DISTRACTED WITH THE MODERN CONCERNS SO PRECIOUS TO YOU AND YOUR KIND.

ETHICS, AND ORDER, AND SOCIETY... WHEN ALL THAT HAS EVER MATTERED WAS *SURVIVAL.* I SAVED *MILLIONS,* REED. OWEN SAVED *MILLIONS.*

AND WHAT WAS IT YOU SAID WHEN YOU APPEARED HERE ON MY WORLD? ALL YOU COULD SAVE WAS YOURSELF.

YOU COULDN'T EVEN SAVE YOUR *FAMILY.*

HOW DARE YOU.

HAVEN'T YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION, REED? I DARE QUITE A BIT.

I DARED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN LIVING AND DYING FOR MILLIONS.

AND NOW I'LL CHOOSE FOR YOU AS WELL.

SNAP

WHAT IS THIS?

MISTER REECE?

DID YOU BRING ME SOMETHING TO EAT, VICTOR?

NO.

THEN THAT MAKES THE TWO OF YOU *EQUAL*, DOESN'T IT?

RRAARRR

FAIR'S FAIR, RIGHT?

YOU WOULD DARE PUT YOUR HANDS ON ME?!

HAVEN'T YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION, VICTOR? I DARE QUITE A BIT, TOO.

THINGS AREN'T SO EASY WHEN YOU'RE NOT OMNIPOTENT, ARE THEY?

RRAAAAR!

EASY? YOU THINK ANY OF THIS HAS BEEN EASY?

YOU THINK POWER MAKES IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES MORE PALATABLE?

I HAVE ALWAYS HAD POWER, REED. NOTHING HAS EVER BEEN EASY.

THE FIRST THING I OFFERED WAS SALVATION.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S NOT EASY? HAVING YOUR LIFE ERASED BECAUSE SOMEONE WANTS TO INDULGE THEMSELVES.

YOU MADE YOURSELF GOD AND THE FIRST THING YOU DID WAS REPLACE ME.

YOU STOLE MY FAMILY.

"YOU'RE WRONG. *THEY* CHOSE *ME.*

"...BUT THEY CHOSE. *SHE* CHOSE. SHE BELIEVED.

"CAN'T YOU ACCEPT THAT I HAVE DONE *GOOD THINGS* HERE?"

"IF YOU WISH TO BELIEVE THAT THEY ONLY DID SO IN THE ABSENCE OF YOU, VERY WELL...

"ALL THAT I HAVE DONE--ALL OF THIS-- AND YOU STILL GIVE ME NO CREDIT.

"I'M NOT BLIND, VICTOR. I DO ACCEPT IT...BUT YOU COULD HAVE DONE MORE.

"YOU CLOSED YOUR HANDS AROUND EVERYTHING THAT WAS LEFT AND CALLED IT *YOURS.*

"YOU'RE SO AFRAID OF LOSING THE THINGS YOU'VE SAVED THAT YOU HOLD THEM TOO TIGHT.

"DON'T YOU SEE, VICTOR? A TREE IS JUST A SEED IN ITS REALIZED STATE."

"THIS IS WHAT ALWAYS CAUSES YOUR FALL, REED.

"ABANDONING THE GOOD BECAUSE YOU DESIRE THE PERFECT.

"I UNDERSTAND NOW--I KNOW WHAT THIS IS.

"IT'S THE SAME THING IT'S ALWAYS BEEN BETWEEN YOU AND I..."

...YOU THINK YOU ARE BETTER THAN I AM.

NO, VICTOR. YOU'RE WRONG.

I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED YOU COULD BE BETTER THAN WHAT YOU ARE.

NO. I MEAN *NOW.* THIS MOMENT.

FSSSSSHH

IF YOU HAD THIS POWER, YOU THINK YOU COULD HAVE SOLVED IT ALL--SOLVED EVERYTHING...

YOU THINK YOU COULD HAVE DONE *SO...MUCH... BETTER...*

DON'T YOU?

DON'T YOU?!

YES.

AND WE *BOTH* KNOW IT, DON'T WE?

YES. DAMN YOU...

NOW DIE!

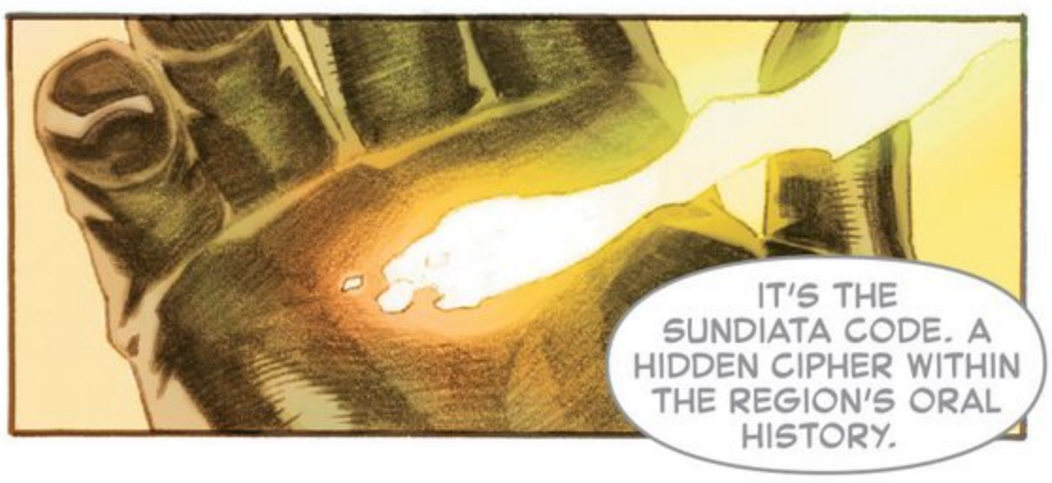
AAAA

OKAY, THEN.

IF YOU BOTH AGREE...

WAIT. NO...

BA DA Doooo


IT'S THE SUNDIATA CODE. A HIDDEN CIPHER WITHIN THE REGION'S ORAL HISTORY.

WAKANDA.
IT WORKED...
IT'S A THEORY ABOUT *TRADITION.* OF EXACTLY HOW WAKANDAN EXCELLENCE HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS. PASSED DOWN THROUGH BLOOD.
AH. I SEE...
...BLOOD.
SO WE REMEMBER WHERE WE CAME FROM...

...ON THE WAY TO *WHERE WE'RE GOING.*

FSSHH

HUH!

STELLAR CARTOGRAPHY-- A MAP OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.

COUNT, KIMO...TWELVE PLANETS.

IT'S NOT OURS.

BUT IT IS WHERE YOU ARE HEADED.

MY KING!

YES.

CONGRATULATIONS, *MAKERS.* ON YOUR FEET--*STAND TALL.* YOU ARE THE FINEST OF YOUR GENERATION.

KIMO, T'DORI... VERY, VERY WELL DONE.

N'KONO, YOUR FATHER'S GRANDFATHER WAS T'KONDA--THE BLACK PANTHER OF HIS TIME.

HE WAS CALLED *"THE WALL,"* AND NOW HIS SPIRIT, LIKE ALL OTHER PREVIOUS PANTHERS, LIVES WITHIN ME.

I FEEL HIS PRIDE WHEN I LOOK AT YOU.

PRIDE.

PRIDE, AND NOT ***SHAME,*** WHICH IS WHAT WE FEEL FOR THE WORLD ***OUT THERE.***

GREAT SOCIETIES ARE CRUMBLING AROUND US, AND THE OLD MEN WHO RUN THEM ARE OUT OF IDEAS.

SO ALL EYES TURN TO YOU, ***OUR CHILDREN--*** TO BUILD US SOMETHING ***BETTER.***

THIS IS M23-671A. AN M-CLASS PLANET CIRCLING AN ORANGE DWARF 241 LIGHT-YEARS AWAY.

THE WEST HAS ABANDONED SPACE, AND THE EAST CRAWLS WHEN IT COULD RUN...AS A RESULT, WAKANDA NOW POSSESSES THE PREEMINENT SPACE PROGRAM ON THE PLANET...

BUT WE MUST DO MORE, GO FARTHER... TO SOMEWHERE NO HUMAN HAS EVER BEEN.

YOUR PRIZE, ***MAKERS...*** ARE ***THE STARS*** THEMSELVES.

THE STARS...OH, WOW...

I KNOW. YOU DREAM A THING, AND THE IDEA THAT IT COULD BECOME REAL...

AMAZING.

HEY...DO YOU GUYS FEEL THAT... LIKE LITTLE MICRO-TREMORS?

HRMPH. I'M NOT SEEING ANYTHING.

TURN AROUND...

LOOK UP.

RRRR

EIGHT MONTHS LATER

THE MARVEL UNIVERSE

THE PRIME EARTH

NEW YORK CITY.

HEY, LITTLE SPIDER PERSON...

BEFORE YOU GO, I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.

Uh, okay...

What?

THANKS FOR THE BURGER...

...I OWE YOU ONE.

WHAT DID YOU TELL *YOUR MOM* YOU'D BE DOING, MILES?

STUDYING WITH A FRIEND.

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

SO NOT A *TOTAL* LIE. MORE OF A HALF-TRUTH.

YOU EAT A SNACK?

UH-HUH.

YOU DO YOUR HOMEWORK?

YEAH.

YOU WANNA GO BEAT UP SOME BAD GUYS, SPIDER-MAN?

OH, HELL YES.

"EXPLAIN IT TO ME AGAIN."

OKAY, MOM...

DO YOU WANT THE COMPLICATED VERSION OR THE SUPER-COMPLICATED ONE?

I'D PREFER THE ONE THAT MAKES SENSE.

THINK YOU CAN DO THAT, DEAR?

=SIGH=

I CAN TRY. SO...

...OWEN OVER THERE IS THE KEY. HE'S KIND OF A HUMAN REPOSITORY OF UNLIMITED POWER.

AND THAT OMNIPOTENT POWER HAS TO BE DIRECTED--USED--BY AN INDIVIDUAL. IN THIS CASE, DAD.

AND THAT'S WHERE IT REALLY GETS INTERESTING, AS FRANKLIN IS A UNIVERSAL SHAPER. A DREAMER.

"SO HE HAS THESE IDEAS..."

FOR WORLDS?

FOR *UNIVERSES*, MOM. WHOLE UNIVERSES!

"THEN HE GIVES THEM TO DAD.

"AND DAD, USING ALL THAT POWER, SPINS THEM OFF INTO THEIR OWN REALITY.

"FINALLY, THEY SLICE OFF A BIT OF OWEN TO GO WITH IT. LIKE AN ANCHOR. BUT IT ALSO SERVES TO MAKE THE MOLECULE MAN BETTER. WHOLE.

"HEALING HIM."

OKAY.

AND THAT'S JUST THE START OF WHAT WE'RE DOING. ALL OF THIS HAS TO BE CATALOGUED. RECORDED.

EXPLORED.

SO WE'RE LIKE LEWIS AND CLARK, EXCEPT FOR ALL OF EXISTENCE.

WELL...SURE, MOM, IF LEWIS AND CLARK WERE ALSO CREATING THE LAND THEY WERE EXPLORING.

AND WERE SMARTER.

AND TOTALLY BETTER LOOKING.

OKAY. GOTTA WORK NOW.

DID YOU GUYS TALK ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD START, ALEX?

YEAH. AND AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THAT WE'D NEED TO START WITH THE UNDERLYING PHYSICS OF IT ALL. BUT THEN ONOME NOTICED THAT FRANKLIN'S ACTUALLY PLAYING PRETTY FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE ENTIRE SUPERSTRUCTURE...

...SO MY BEST GUESS RIGHT NOW? I THINK WE HAVE TO START WITH CREATION MYTHS. WHICH, OF COURSE, LEADS TO A TOTALLY SEPARATE SET OF PROBLEMS HAVING

HEY! REED!

YES?

I GOTTA TELL YOU, MISTER...

...THIS SURE IS SOMETHING.

CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION, DAD?

OF COURSE.

ARE WE NOT SUPER HEROES ANYMORE?

WELL, HERE'S THE THING, FRANKLIN.

IT'S *DOING* GOOD THAT COUNTS, NOT NECESSARILY HOW YOU DO IT.

AND WHAT WE'RE DOING RIGHT NOW MATTERS-- IT MIGHT BE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING EVER-- AND THE BEST PART IS I GET TO DO IT WITH ALL OF YOU.

SO, NO...NO MORE SUPER HEROES FOR A WHILE, JUST SCIENCE.

AND NO MORE MISTER FANTASTIC, JUST DAD.

THAT DOESN'T SOUND TOO BAD, DOES IT?

NOPE.

GONNA PLAY NOW.

YOU KNOW...FOR NOT BEING A SUPER HERO, THAT WAS A PRETTY AMAZING FINAL ACT.

STILL...BEN. JOHNNY.

THEY CAN'T BE WITH US. THEY *SHOULDN'T* BE. THEIR ACT ISN'T ANYWHERE CLOSE TO BEING FINISHED.

STILL, IT WAS *ENOUGH*, REED.

THE LIFE RAFT BROKE AND I THOUGHT WE WERE DONE...

...AND THEN YOU SAVED US.

WELL...

"I HAD SOME HELP.

"AND THAT HELP BOUGHT ME JUST ENOUGH TIME TO FIX SO MANY THINGS I'VE BEEN WRONG ABOUT.

"I LEARNED THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIVING AND DYING IS MANAGING FEAR.

"NOT BEING SO AFRAID OF LOSING THE THINGS YOU LOVE THAT YOU HOLD THEM TOO TIGHT.

"I USED TO BELIEVE IN UNIVERSAL CONTRACTION. ENTROPY AND THE END OF ALL THINGS.

"WELL, I'VE CHANGED MY MIND.

"I'M LETTING GO.

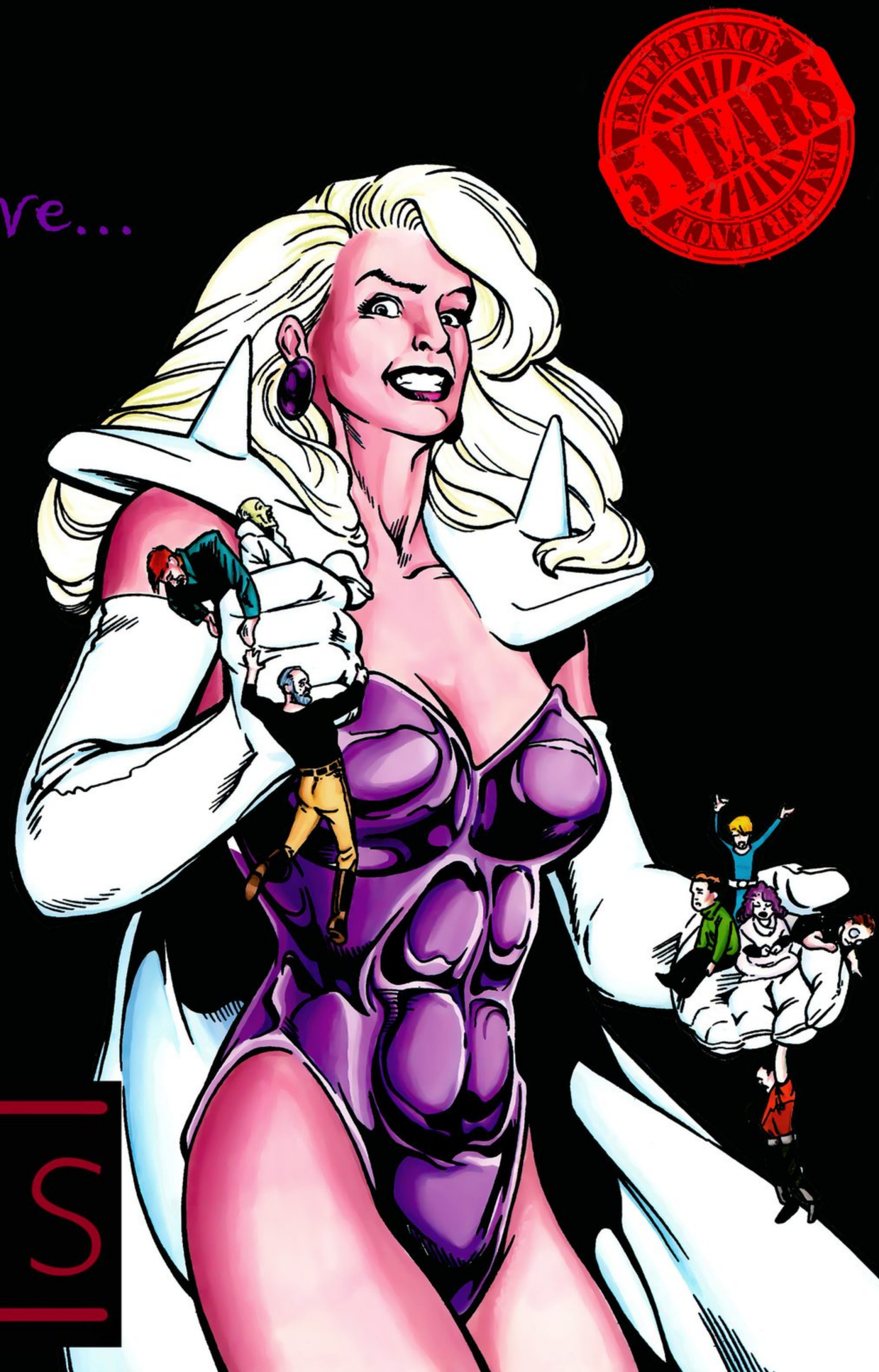
"BECAUSE NOW I BELIEVE IN EXPANSION. I BELIEVE WE ENDURE.

"DON'T YOU SEE?

"EVERYTHING LIVES."

THE END.

From Baaldur, with love...



GLORITH

novus